

Good Morning Members of the Education Committee of the General Assembly,

I urge each and every one of you not to continue turning your face away from the neediest children in Connecticut; the poor. The Governor's flat funding proposal again contributes to the inequitable distribution of \$ across this state's educational systems. Priority Schools, New Britain being one that has not been allocated enough resources year after year is accomplishing a lot with very little. Imagine what we would accomplish in improving the academic achievement of our children, if we received an equitable amount of \$ to provide the resources to close the achievement gap that was not created by New Britain and priority schools, but by the lack of support from the state year after year.

The brutal facts are that due to the lack of \$, our classroom sizes continue to increase; I have had and continue to have K classes with between 27- 30 students this year. Many of our children come to us with little or no preschool experience, with social emotional concerns that in reality need to be treated in order for them to learn effectively. Most of them are not on grade level thus requiring intensive interventions in Reading and Math. At Smalley Academy, Only approximately 20% of our children are on grade level. With the little we get, we are making growth but with the limited resources we are not able to provide all students with what they intensively need both academically, socially and emotionally. We must invest in this children now so that they are prepared for college and career readiness and not find all of us having to invest more in them later.

Smalley Academy students are coming to building facilities that need inconsiderable amounts of improvements.

At Smalley Academy, I have more than 50% of the teachers that are non-tenured thus needing a lot of support. These new teachers have a lot of potential in becoming great educators.

However with minimal school budgets how do we support them in improving their efficacy? Certainly not, with flat funding year after year?

It is an injustice to hide behind the Sheff decision and consider New Britain a suburb. It is an injustice to our children to increase the funding of some schools and leave others like New Britain Schools behind. Districts need to be funded based on how many students need intensive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Simply put, the children that need more support must be provided with more resources. This has not been the case; we must be equipped to improve these state's achievement gap and flat funding is not the answer.

Today's children are tomorrow's future. Let's invest in them now!

Respectfully submitted by:

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"Smalley Bees Work Hard
Smalley Bees Get Ready for College
Smalley Bees Change the World"